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## Planning Statement

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Demolition of the existing modular classroom buildings and the erection of a single storey side and rear extension encompassing a new junior classroom, cloak area, SEN room, library and circulation space at St Augustine's C of E Primary School, Vicarage Lane, Haywards Heath, RH17 7PB.

**Prepared on behalf of West Sussex County Council  
December 2025**

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# Planning Statement

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## Planning Statement

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Site Name:	St Augustine's C of E Primary School, Vicarage Lane, Haywards Heath, RH17 7PB.
Client Name:	West Sussex County Council
Type of Report:	Planning Statement
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Date:	December 2025

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# Planning Statement

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## 1 Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement is prepared by Strutt & Parker on the instructions Atkins Realis on behalf of West Sussex County Council (the client) to support a planning application for the demolition of the existing modular classroom building and the erection of a single storey side and rear extension encompassing a new junior classroom, cloak area, SEN room, library and circulation space at St Augustine's C of E Primary School, Vicarage Lane, Haywards Heath, RH17 7PB.

1.2 The project team have undertaken informal pre-application advice with West Sussex County Council and these comments have helped to shape the planning application as submitted.

1.3 This planning statement sets out the development proposal, relevant planning history and appraises the scheme against relevant national and local policy.

1.4 This application is supported by the following documents and reports:

### Planning

- Planning Statement – Strutt and Parker (Oct 2025).
- Planning application forms – submitted via planning portal.
- Educational needs statement (Oct 2025) – West Sussex County Council

### Architectural

- St Augustine's Design Access Statement – Atkins Realis.
- SAPS-ATRL-XX-00-DR-AR-011201-EXISTING GROUND FLOOR PLAN
- SAPS-ATRL-XX-00-DR-AR-011211-PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN
- SAPS-ATRL-XX-RL-DR-AR-011202-EXISTING ROOF PLAN
- SAPS-ATRL-XX-RL-DR-AR-011212-PROPOSED ROOF PLAN
- SAPS-ATRL-XX-XX-DR-AR-012201-EXISTING ELEVATIONS
- SAPS-ATRL-XX-XX-DR-AR-012211-PROPOSED ELEVATION
- SAPS-ATRL-XX-XX-DR-AR-021200-EXISTING SITE LOCATION PLAN
- SAPS-ATRL-XX-XX-DR-AR-021201-EXISTING SITE PLAN
- SAPS-ATRL-XX-XX-DR-AR-021210-PROPOSED SITE LOCATION PLAN
- SAPS-ATRL-XX-XX-DR-AR-021212-PROPOSED SITE PLAN

### Landscaping

- SAS-ATR-XX-XX-RP-L-400010\_Landscape Design Report (Planning)

### Ecology

- St Augustine's School Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – Date (Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology).

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## Drainage

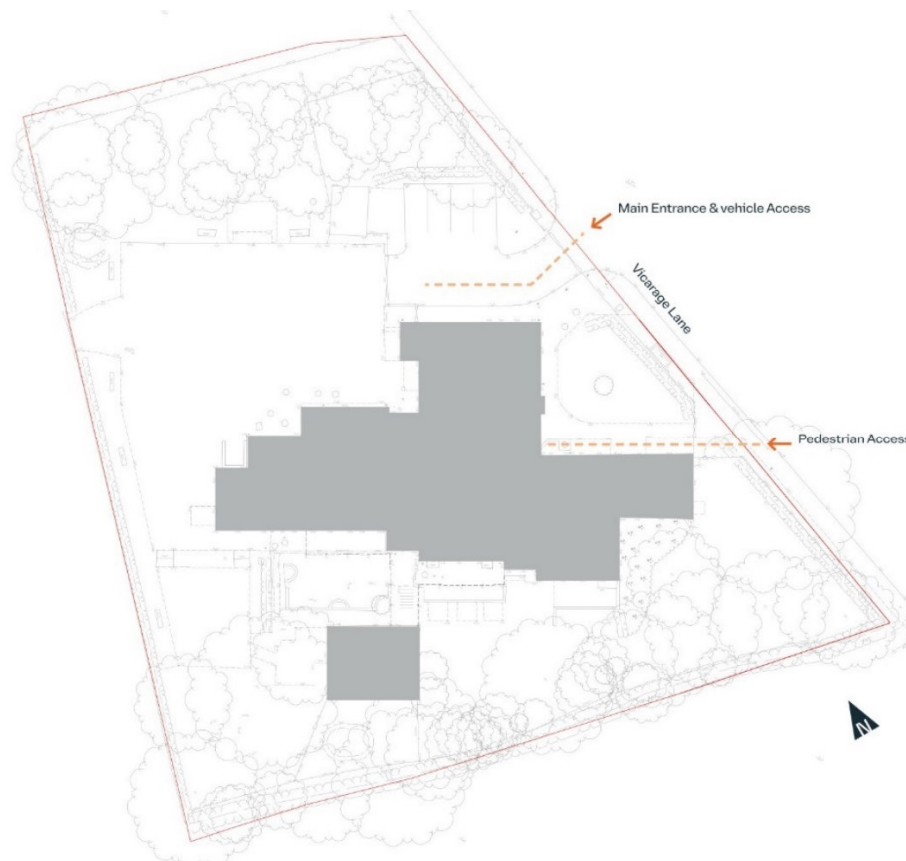
- 33988-CM.01.P2 Catchment Areas
- 33988-DR.01.P2 Existing Drainage
- 33988-EX.01.P4 Drainage G A
- 33988-EX.02.P1 Drainage Section

## Other reports

- Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement - Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology.
- Tree Retention Protection Plan - LLD3470-ARB-DWG-020 01
- Tree Retention Protection Plan - LLD3470-ARB-DWG-021 01
- Tree Retention Protection Plan - LLD3470-ARB-DWG-022 01

## 2. Site Description

- 2.1 St Augustine's Primary School is in the village of Scaynes Hill, located in the Mid Sussex District, 1.2km east of Haywards Heath. Scaynes Hill has a range of services and has good transport links providing access to the larger nearby towns of Haywards Heath and smaller villages such as North Chailey.
- 2.2 The original three classroom school building was constructed in 1981. A mobile classroom south of the site was erected in 1987. In 1998 a single-storey extension to the existing school was added to the west of the original building.
- 2.3 In 2004 a single-storey extension, containing staff facilities was added at the front of the site, which connects back into the original school building.



**Figure 1: Existing site plan**

- 2.4 The land owned by WSCC (Figure 1) extends to 0.41 hectares and includes a large area of hardstanding dedicated to recreation for the school. The site is bordered by a residential dwelling (The Dees) to the north-west of the site, and several other dwellings to the east. These dwellings are separated from the site by a single lane road known as 'The Coppice' and a mature tree line within the school grounds.

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2.5 To the south-west of the site is the Scaynes Hill Recreation Ground which extends to almost 2 hectares.

2.6 The site is accessed from 'Vicarage Lane', which is a grade D adopted road (NSG no: 25601239). The main vehicle access to the site is located on this road, at the south-east corner of the site.



**Figure 2: Access from Vicarage Lane**

2.7 The site is located within the Scaynes Hill built-up area boundary as defined on the Mid Sussex District Council Proposals Map (2018).

2.8 Scaynes Hill is recognised as a 'Category 3' settlement which is described as a medium sized village providing essential services for the needs of their own residents and immediate surrounding communities. Whilst more limited, these can include key services such as primary schools, shops, recreation and community facilities, often shared with neighbouring settlements.

2.9 There are no other sensitive designations which would otherwise preclude or restrict development.

### **3. Planning History**

- 3.1 There is limited planning history on the West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) or Mid Sussex District Council's (MSDC) database.
- 3.2 Planning approval was granted for a single storey extension to provide improved staff accommodation in 2004 under planning reference LR/839/04.
- 3.3 A further application is listed for the Scaynes Hill CEP school in 1998 for the 'Construction of single storey extension comprising music room, group room, library area'.

#### *Pre-application - Planning*

- 3.4 The proposal has benefitted from a pre-application meeting with West Sussex County Council officer Chris Bartlett on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025.
- 3.5 This pre-application confirmed validation requirements for the application. No major concerns with the development proposals were raised. It was agreed that the extension at the rear of the building will result in limited public visibility.

#### Community Engagement

- 3.6 As required by WSSCCs adopted procedures a public engagement event was undertaken on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2025.
- 3.7 Parents and residents were invited to the event and asked which aspects of the design they liked or disliked, assess the importance of various criteria in the design and to identify where they lived. The feedback was highly supportive of the development proposals
- 3.8 Respondents were also asked if there were any aspects of the scheme that they did not like, however no negative feedback was received.

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## 4. Description of the Development

- 4.1 This application seeks planning permission for the demolition of the existing modular classroom building and the erection of a single storey side and rear extension encompassing a new junior classroom, cloak area, SEN room, library and circulation space.
- 4.2 The extension would comprise teaching space and welfare facilities which would be a Class F1 use. The size of the extension would be permissible under part 7, Class M of the General Permitted Development Order, however the height of the proposed extension is 5.6m and therefore does not comply with Part M1 (d) (ii) because the extension is within 10metres of the site boundary.
- 4.3 The existing single storey modular building would be removed from the site which measures 62sqm (GIA). The proposed extension would have a gross internal floor area of 181sqm. This represents a net increase in floor area of 119sqm over the site. As shown in figure 3, this would include a Basic Teaching area (60sqm). Learning resource area (38sqm), Storage (21sqm) and non-net areas (including partitions) (65sqm).
- 4.4 The design proposal includes:
- Reprovision of Junior Classroom from life expired modular block, including a wet area, cloak area and teaching storage.
  - Reprovision of Library to suit proposed new layout, including storage and a SEN resource space.
  - Refurbishment of existing KS2 toilet area to include a hygiene room which is a requirement by the DfE (including an accessible WC for the pupils).
  - Refurbishment of existing staff toilet to accommodate a new compliant size accessible toilet.
  - Extend canopy in front of new classroom extension in line with existing canopy.

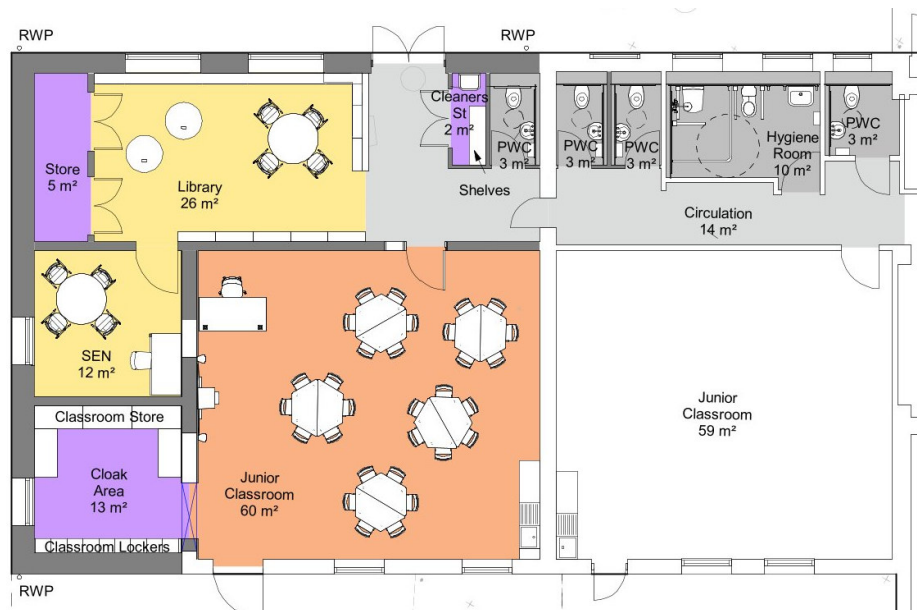


Figure 3: Proposed floor plan

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- 4.5 The extension would extend to a maximum width of 12.6m and would have a pitched roof with an eaves height of 3m and a ridge height of 5.68m.
- 4.6 The extension would be constructed from traditional red/brown brickwork to match the existing building. The front (north) elevation of the building would include a new set of double doors and two windows. The side (west) elevation would also include two small windows for the SEN room and the cloakroom. The rear (south) elevation would include a single door and two windows providing access and adequate natural light into the junior classroom.
- 4.7 The internal reconfiguration, undertaken in line with BB103 guidance, provides additional toilet facilities for the school, improving convenience, supervision and hygiene. A new hygiene room with accessible toilet and shower has also been included in the design. The new classroom will benefit from direct access to the play space south of the school supporting safe and supervised outdoor recreation.
- 4.8 Dark brown Aluminium windows and doors are proposed in fitting with the existing building. The proposed extension will include of pitched roof which continues the pitch of the existing roof of the school and would be clad with similar dark clay roof tiles.
- 4.9 Following the identified demolition works, the existing hardstanding will be converted into a new outdoor play space as indicated on the Landscape Masterplan. There are various site improvements which are as follows:
- New external hard and soft landscape areas adjacent to the new building extension.
  - Removal of the existing temporary building and some structures
  - New surfacing, slope and steps: Marshalls Saxon Conservation step
  - New fencing and gates – 1.2m green galvanised steel
  - New ornamental planting: Heuchera; Salvia officinalis; Skimmia x confusa; Bracyglottis; Goldschleier; Monch; Formosa.

## 5. Planning Policy Context

- 5.1 This section of the report summarises the national and local policy context relevant to the determination of the proposed development.
- 5.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, where the Development Plan contains relevant policies, an application for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.3 The Local Plan is formed of the Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) District Plan (DP) 2014-2031, adopted in March 2018, and the Site Allocations DPD (June 2022).
- 5.4 MSDC has submitted its Regulation 19 Local Plan for examination in July 2024. Examination hearing sessions commenced in October 2024 however after the initial opening sessions the inspector highlighted significant concerns with the legality of the local plan as submitted.
- 5.5 The examination of the District Plan concluded that the examination could not proceed due to the council's failure to satisfy the duty of cooperate with neighbouring authorities.
- 5.6 National planning policy is contained within the recently revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) with guidance provided in National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

### **National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)**

- 5.7 Chapter 2 of the NPPF focuses on achieving sustainable development. Paragraph 11 states that at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:
- a) *approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
  - b) *where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
    - i) *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
    - ii) *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use*

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*of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.*

- 5.8 Paragraph 100 highlights the importance of meeting the needs to existing and new communities, particularly through giving great weight to development proposals improving education provision:

*It is important that a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 places are available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:*

- a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and*
- b) work with early years, school and post-16 promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted.*

- 5.9 The revised NPPF includes a revised paragraph 101 which stated that “*Significant weight should be placed on the importance of new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure when considering proposals for development.*”

- 5.10 Paragraph 123 states that “*Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land*”.

- 5.11 Paragraph 204 states that “*When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest*”.

- 5.12 Paragraph 219 states that “*Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably*”.

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## **Mid Sussex District Council – District Plan (2018)**

- 5.13 Policy DP1 (Sustainable Economic Development) includes Strategic Objectives 7 & 8 which firstly ‘Promote a place which is attractive to a full range of businesses, and where local enterprise thrives; and secondly, ‘to provide opportunities for people to live and work within their communities’. This policy states that 532 new jobs will be required per year. This will be achieved through various means including ‘Supporting existing businesses and allowing them room to expand’ and ‘Seeking the provision of appropriate infrastructure to support business growth – in particular high speed broadband connections’.
- 5.14 This policy states that the effective use of employment land and premises will be made by permitting appropriate intensification, conversion, redevelopment and/ or extension for employment uses providing it is in accordance with other policies in the Plan.
- 5.15 Policy DP6 (Settlement Hierarchy) states “*Development will be permitted within towns and villages with defined built-up area boundaries. Any infilling and redevelopment will be required to demonstrate that it is of an appropriate nature and scale (with particular regard to DP26: Character and Design), and not cause harm to the character and function of the settlement*”. This policy advises that the developer will need to satisfy the council that the proposal does not represent an underdevelopment of the site with regard to Policy26 (Character and Design).
- 5.16 Policy DP25 (Community Facilities and Local Services) of the adopted Mid Sussex DC District Plan states “The provision or improvement of community facilities and local services that contribute to creating sustainable communities will be supported”.
- 5.17 Policy DP26 (Character and Design) provides general character and design requirements for new development. All applicants will be required to demonstrate that the development: is of high quality design and layout and includes appropriate landscaping and greenspace; creates a sense of place while addressing the character and scale of the surrounding buildings and landscaping; does not cause significant harm to the amenities of existing residents and future occupants of new dwellings, including taking account of impact on privacy, outlook, daylight and sunlight, and noise, air and light pollution; creates a pedestrian-friendly layout that is safe, well connected, legible and accessible; optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development.

## **Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan (2014-2031)**

- 5.18 The Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan was made in January 2024 and highlight the site within the built-up area boundary of the Scaynes Hill and located opposite the Scaynes Hill Recreation ground which is allocated as a Local Green Space (LLRNP6). There do not appear to be any other designations which are relevant to the site or the development proposals.

## 6. Planning Assessment

6.1 This section of the report considers relevant planning policy relating to the demolition of the existing modular classroom and the erection of a single storey side extension encompassing new classroom facilities. It will consider the following issues:

- a) Principle of development
- b) The need for the development
- c) Playing field provision considerations
- d) Impact on neighbouring amenity
- e) Ecology, landscaping & Biodiversity net gain
- f) Flooding / Drainage considerations
- g) Trees

a) Principle of Development

6.2 Planning permission is sought for demolition of the existing modular classroom building and the erection of a single storey rear extension encompassing a new junior classroom, cloak area, SEN room, library and circulation space

6.3 Firstly, the site's location within the settlement boundary means that the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' is engaged in line with paragraph 11 of the NPPF. For 'decision-taking' this requires approving applications that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

6.4 The NPPF provides strong support towards the principle of development and in-line with paragraph 100, 'Great weight' should be given to the need to create, expand or alter early years, schools and post-16 facilities.

6.5 The principle of development is further supported by paragraph 101 of the NPPF which states that 'Significant weight' should be placed on the importance of new, expanded or upgraded public service infrastructure such as schools.

6.6 Adopted DP policy 25 provides strong support for the provision of new or improved community facilities such as primary schools. In addition, the proposal includes improvements to the 'green infrastructure' on-site through improved outdoor play space.

6.7 In the emerging district plan the site is also located within the defined built-up area boundary, so the proposal complies with Policy DPI6 (Community and Cultural Facilities and Local Services). This policy requires that the need for the community or cultural facility is clearly demonstrated.

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6.8 In summary, the proposed extension to St Augustine's primary school is strongly supported in local and national planning policy. The extension will provide an excellent compliant internal teaching environment and includes improvements to the schools outside play space therefore is in full compliance with adopted DP policy 25, emerging District Plan policy DPI6 and relevant policies of the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan.

b) The need for the development

6.9 St Augustine's Primary School accommodates approximately 105 pupils, aged between 4 to 11 years old. The site supports a range of teaching and support staff across the site. The modular classroom was constructed in the 1987 and is now in very poor condition and unfit for modern teaching purposes as shown in figure 4).



**Figure 4: photograph of portacabin to be demolished**

6.10 The modular building is segregated from the main school and the school have actively sought its replacement in recent years. The submitted scheme represents the preferred option following a detailed feasibility options appraisal and value engineering exercise carried out earlier this year.

6.11 In terms of capacity the existing modular building provides a single classroom (and storage) of 62sqm, and the proposal re-provides a junior classroom of 60sqm and an SEN room of 12sqm, a larger library of 26sqm (with dedicated storage), a dedicated cloakroom of 13sqm. The re-provision of the existing classroom to be lost followed the demolition of the modular building is considered sufficient for planned pupil numbers.

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## c) Playing field provision considerations

6.12 The proposed development is considered to most accurately meet Exemption 3 of the Sport England adopted guidance. The exemption is listed as follows:

*'The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming, or forming part of, a playing pitch, and does not result in the loss of or inability to make use of any playing pitch (including the maintenance of adequate safety margins), a reduction in the size of the playing areas of any playing pitch or the loss of any other sporting/ancillary facilities on the site'.*

6.13 The area of the site to be developed to form the extension is not demarked as a 'playing pitch' and is largely covered by built development including the single storey extension (SEN room) to be demolished, only lightly used by the children attending the school. The hardstanding in this area of the site is neither demarked as a playing pitch nor does it contain any structures such as goal posts. In addition, the functionality of the main playing area to the north will be fully retained following construction of the proposed extension.



**Figure 5 – photograph of proposed extension location**

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**Figure 6 – photograph of proposed extension location including SEN extension to be demolished**

6.14 Following demolition of the existing modular classroom, the southern section of the site will be landscaped to form informal amenity space with access to the habitat area which includes the existing pond.

6.15 In summary, Sport England exemption 3 is considered to have been met and the development has been restricted to an area of land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch. In addition, the loss of this space is adequately mitigated through the provision of new high quality amenity space on the southern section of the site and other site wide landscape and biodiversity improvements such as the sensory planting.

#### d) Impact on neighbouring amenity

6.16 The site is only bordered by one residential property to the north listed as 'The Dees'. The proposed extension would be approximately 30m from the shared boundary between the sites. In addition, there is a mature treeline on the schools northern boundary which restricts views in and out of the school site. There will be limited visibility of the proposed extension from 'The Dees' and no impact on daylight or loss of amenity through noise disturbance.

6.17 As stated, the extension will replace the existing modular building and would result a similar provision of teaching space, therefore there would be no intensity of use at the site.

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6.18 It was considered unnecessary to carry out a noise survey to support this minor planning application because the educational use currently exists on the site and the development will not increase the overall intensity of the sites use.

6.19 In summary, due to the discrete positioning of the extension to the side of the building and appropriate separation distance to the adjoining residential property, there would be no adverse impact on the amenity of 'The Dees' or the other residential properties to the south of the site.

### e) Ecology, landscaping & Biodiversity net gain

#### Ecology

6.20 This application is supported by a Preliminary Ecology Appraisal completed in March 2025 by Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology.

6.21 The PEA states in section 4.4.8 that the site has a 'Low potential' for winter roosting and foraging / commuting bats. Low potential means "A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. However these do not provide enough shelter, space, protection, appropriate conditions or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats".

6.22 The BCT Bat Survey Guidance 2024 states:

*"If the structure has been classified as having low suitability for bats, an ecologist should make a professional judgement on how to proceed based on all of the evidence available and the balance of probabilities. Thought processes and decision making should be adequately recorded as a paper trail. If all areas (including voids, cracks and crevices) of a structure have been inspected and no evidence found (and is unlikely to have been removed by weather or cleaning or be hidden), then further surveys are not appropriate. If complete inspection is not possible then proportionality must be considered. A single survey during the summer months may be adequate to ensure nothing obvious has been missed and/or precautionary measures could be applied during works. This is likely to be a more proportionate approach than carrying out multiple surveys".*

6.23 A review of the B03 portcabin to be removed from the site states "A one-storey portakabin style building, with a flat felt roof. There was a small ridge around the roof which may provide roosting opportunities. This building was connected to B01 by a plexiglass and timber frame veranda". This also stated that an internal survey was not possible at this time due to the portacabin being occupied as a classroom at the time. The PEA does confirm that an external assessment of the building was undertaken, and no evidence was found of roosting bats, therefore in line with the BCT guidance a single emergence survey (as advised in section 7.2 of PEA) may not be required.

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- 6.24 The applicant would be willing to agree to submission of a precautionary method statement, onsite checks and appropriate timing of demolition works. This could be secured by way of a pre-commencement planning condition.
- 6.25 Regarding Great Crested Newts (GCN), Section 5.4.2 of the submitted PEA states “*The protected species assessment identified that the site and adjacent habitats offered low potential to support GCN and the HSI assessment of P1 suggests the water body is of poor suitability. Overall, it is likely that GCN are absent, but it is not possible to completely scope GCN out at this stage, particularly as P1 is so close to B03, which is scheduled for demolition*”. P1 is the small pond located near to the portacabin (B3) which will be removed.
- 6.26 Whilst B3 is being removed, the concerned pond (P1) will be retained within the development works. It should be noted that the proposed development is on existing concrete and restricted to developer areas therefore does not affect habitats onsite (as identified in the PEA).
- 6.27 The recommendation for a further eDNA survey could be covered by a precautionary construction method statement, GCN onsite checks and an appropriate timing of development works to be agreed with the county ecologist. This could again be secured by way of a pre-commencement planning condition.
- 6.28 The PEA (section 6) outlines opportunities for ecological enhancements on the site which include:
- The use of log and compost piles to provide refugia for reptiles and amphibians.
  - Installation of integrated bird and bat boxes into new buildings.
  - Installation of ‘bug hotels’, bird and bat boxes to mature trees.
  - All new planting should ideally be native species. Where this is not possible all ornamental varieties should have a known wildlife value, such as species listed on ‘RHS Plants for Pollinators’

### Landscaping

- 6.29 The proposed development includes a series of hard and soft landscaping improvements as outlined on the submitted Landscape General Arrangement Drawing (SAS-ATR-XX-XX-D-L-401001\_External Arrangement), SAS-ATR-XX-XX-D-L-401002\_External Levels Strategy Plan, SAS-ATR-XX-XX-D-L-401003\_External Access & Circulation Strategy Plan.
- 6.30 Following demolition of the existing single storey modular classroom, the southern area of the site will be redeveloped into an improved amenity area including sensory planting and improved access to the pond / habitat area.

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6.31 The site works include improvements to the accessibility of the southern area of the site including a sloped access route on the eastern side of the garden/amenity space and a high-quality circulation route around the extension.

6.32 In summary, the proposed hard and soft landscape scheme maximises high quality amenity space on the site and provides valuable new biodiversity whilst protecting existing trees and wildlife on the site.

### Biodiversity net gain (BNG)

6.33 In England, Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 makes provision for a 10% biodiversity gain to be a condition of planning permission through amendment of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. It also makes provision for habitat enhancements to deliver biodiversity gain to be maintained for a period of at least 30 years after the development is completed. Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 was brought into force in 2024; BNG is now mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for most types of development.

6.34 West Sussex County Council, as a public body, has a duty to conserve biodiversity under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (as amended). The introduction of the Environment Act 2021 strengthens this biodiversity duty by amending Section 40 of the Act 2006 so that public bodies also have a duty to enhance biodiversity. Public bodies must now:

- Consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- Act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

6.35 The landscape improvements are largely restricted to replacement paving and creation of new landscaped areas.

6.36 There would be limited impact on any existing grass areas of existing habitats. The proposed hard surfacing within the landscaping works would only measure 16.4sqm. This is less than the 25sqm (and is classified as a non-priority habitat) therefore the development would meet the requirements of the de minimis exemption for BNG.

6.37 Section 5.3.2 of the submitted PEA confirms that:

*The proposed development does not impact a priority habitat. Nor does it impact more than 25m<sup>2</sup> of onsite habitat with a value greater than 0, or 5m of linear habitats such as hedgerows. As such, the development is subject to the de minimis exemption and is not required to demonstrate Biodiversity Net Gain.*

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### f) Drainage

- 6.38 The site is located within Flood Zone 1, therefore is at low risk of flooding. The site area is measured as 0.41Ha, therefore a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is not required to support this application.
- 6.39 The proposed extension does include a new W/C within the footprint of the extension, and the Intention is for new foul drainage to connect to existing manholes as indicated on the submitted drainage plan (33988-EX.01.P4).
- 6.40 To manage surface water drainage, we are proposing a connection to the existing storm water drainage system, both being moderately extended to suit proposed development.

### g) Trees

- 6.41 This application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Survey (AS) and an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) completed by Lizard Landscape design and Ecology in June 2025. This shows that there will be no loss of trees to enable the development and the trees on the site will be protected during construction works. Trees T24 (A), T25 (B), T27 (A), T30 (B) and T31 (C) shall be impacted by the removal of the Modular Unit.
- 6.42 The AMS at 2.9 and 2.10 provides details of tree protection measures which will be implemented during the construction process.

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### 7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The proposed development is for the demolition of the existing modular classroom building and the erection of a single storey side and rear extension encompassing a new junior classroom, cloak area, SEN room, library and circulation space at St Augustine's Primary School.
- 7.2 Although this is not a valid fallback position, the size and scale of the extension would usually comply with part 7, Class M of the General Permitted Development Order, however the height of the existing roof is 0.6m higher than permissible under permitted development. The choice to replicate the height and pitch of the existing roof ensures the extension complements the design and appearance of the existing building.
- 7.3 The site is located within the built-up area boundary of Scaynes Hill, therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged. The development provides high-quality, compliant new teaching space for the primary school which is awarded 'great weight' in paragraph 100 of the revised NPPF and 'significant weight' as public service infrastructure.
- 7.4 The proposals would remove a poor-quality modular classroom from the site and provide a new extension which encompasses a high-quality teaching space, a larger SEN room, library, storage space and improved circulation space for the school.
- 7.5 The extension is discretely located to the side of the building, isolated from any residential properties meaning there would be no impact on the amenity of the only adjoining dwelling, The Dees.
- 7.6 The entirety of the Site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore is at a low risk of flooding. The proposal will not increase flood risk on the site or the adjoining land. This application is supported by a detailed surface water drainage strategy which include a soakaway located to the north of the site.
- 7.7 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal demonstrates that there would be no adverse impact on protected species, and it includes recommendations for enhancements which the applicant would undertake following the grant of consent. The application is in accordance with relevant Policies of the District Plan and biodiversity requirement as outlined in the Environment Act 2021.
- 7.8 In summary, the proposed development accords with both the adopted and emerging Mid Sussex District Plan, the Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan and the NPPF therefore should be granted full planning permission as submitted.